

**Amendments to the Specification:**

Please replace paragraph [0001] with the following amended paragraph:

[0001] This application is a continuation of Application No. 09/481,451, filed 1/11/00, which claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/125,195, filed 3/18/99.

Please replace paragraph [0020] with the following amended paragraph:

[0020] FIG. 3 is a cross-sectional view of the interior of the roller manifold, ~~taken along line A-A<sub>1</sub> of FIG. 2.~~

Please replace paragraph [0023] with the following amended paragraph:

[0023] FIG. 6 is a cross-sectional view of the interior of the roller manifold of FIG. 42.

Please replace paragraph [0026] with the following amended paragraph:

[0026] As seen in FIGS. 1-7, and in particular FIG. 7, the material 15 to be processed is fed into a hopper 40 from a conventional source, such as a cooker or heating device (not shown). In the presently preferred embodiment for cheese material 15 comprises a cheese mass which is fed into the hopper from a cooker at a range of 20-40°C to about 80-100°C at standard atmospheric pressure. The material 15 may be fed to the hopper 40 for holding or the material 15 may be further processed in the hopper, for example, by mixing in additional materials. The material 15 is then pumped into a line 45 by a pump 42. A suitable pump for processing cheese is a typical APV model 3 or model 6 pump, which is commercially available. In the embodiment used for cheese, the pump 42 provides a pressure of up to 150 psi for the cheese exiting the pump into line 45. The material then flows into a filter 44, which is used to filter foreign objects out of the material 15. A suitable filter may be, for example, a Tri-Clover nylon mesh filter SN2 with a mesh of 30, which is commercially available. After the material 15 exits the filter 44 it continues through the line 45 until reaching a juncture 47 where the pipe

distributes the material into three different legs or pipe segments, 45A, 45B, and 45C. It will of course, be recognized by those skilled in the art, that the line 45 may be split into fewer or more legs depending on the particular use contemplated. Each of the legs 45A, 45B, and 45C then feeds into a respective manifold inlet 24A, 24B, and 24C. Preferably, a valve 46A, 46B and 46C is disposed between each of the legs 45A 45C and each of the inlets 24A 24C. A suitable valve is an adjustable valve, such as one commercially available from Lumaco's butterfly valve series, Model No. LUD-7. The manifold 11 receives the material 15 through the inlets 24A 24C and distributes the material, such as cheese material, in an even layer 15 which is deposited onto a casting belt 12 in a manner described more fully below. A first drive mechanism ~~47-19~~ (shown schematically) is used to drive the endless belt 12 at an appropriate rate of speed such as 5-15 ft/min to about 50-70 ft/min.

Please replace paragraph [0027] with the following amended paragraph:

[0027] FIGS. 1-6 show a manifold 11 mounted over the casting belt 12 upon which the material 15 being processed is extruded in a presently used embodiment. A drive mechanism 20 that causes the casting belt to revolve is ~~not shown~~ schematically in FIG. 7.

Please replace paragraph [0029] with the following amended paragraph:

[0029] The manifold has an upstream face plate 32 and a top face plate 38 as shown in FIGS. 2 and 6. Two end face plates 21A and 21B are connected to the upstream face plate 32 and top face plate 38 (FIG. 1). A downstream face 33 faces the roller 16 and is open to the roller 16 along at least a part of its length. In a presently used embodiment, the entire face 33 is open such that the upstream side of the roller 16 forms a surface that closes the face 33. Thus, as best illustrated in FIG. 6, chamber portion 10 with cavity or chamber 22 is formed between the upstream face plate 32, the top face plate 38, the surface of the belt 30 and the outer, upstream surface of the roller 16. In an exemplary embodiment, the length "l" of the chamber 10 corresponds substantially to the length of the roller 16, which is about 42 inches. The

height “*h*” of the cavity is 3 inches and the width “*w*” of the cavity is about 3.5 inches.

Please replace the paragraph [0030] with the following amended paragraph:

[0030] FIG. 6 is a cross sectional view of the interior of the manifold of FIG. 1. In a presently used embodiment, the chamber 10 is manufactured of stainless steel. The roller 16 in a presently used embodiment has two parts -- a stainless steel cylinder 17 and, surrounding the cylinder, a polypropylene sleeve 18 that is shrunk onto the cylinder. This roller 16 is mounted on a rotatable shaft 25 and may be driven by a drive mechanism 20(not shown) that is independent of the mechanism driving the casting belt 12.

Alternatively, the roller 16 can be driven by the same drive mechanism as drives the casting belt 12 or may be freely rotatable without the aid of a drive mechanism.

#### **Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

#### **Listing of Claims:**

1-16. (canceled)

17. (new) An apparatus for forming a continuous sheet from a molten, viscous material, said apparatus comprising:

- a discharge manifold having a hollow interior chamber;
- at least one manifold inlet opening into said chamber for receiving molten, viscous material, each at least one manifold inlet configured for attachment to piping;
- a discharge opening for discharging said material from said chamber; and,